



October Health Promotion Toolbox

Health Literacy Month

Plan of the Week

Week 1

Do you know how to prepare for health care visits? When you are knowledgeable about your health and come to visits prepared, you'll be able to make more informed decisions about your health or a loved one's health. You may feel embarrassed to talk about a health concern, or feel like you should just deal with an illness or an injury. However, an injury, pain, or other symptom could turn into a bigger problem if it is not addressed by a health professional. You can help yourself maintain readiness and live the healthy life you want when you come prepared to health care visits. You may not know exactly how to best [communicate your concerns with your health care provider](#), but by following these [four tips on talking to your doctor](#) you'll learn how to come prepared to your next annual physical or other health care visit. If you look online before your visit to learn more about an existing health concern, make sure to follow these [instructions to find the right information on the web](#).

Week 2

Your lifestyle choices affect your overall health. Be sure to take the appropriate preventive action by following health care provider instructions to stay healthy in between visits and prevent unwanted health problems. As a Sailor or Marine, you are required to have an annual physical. Fulfilling this requirement is important for your military career, but checking off boxes should not be your only goal during your physical. Take the time to ask questions about your health and follow any instructions the health care provider gives you during the visit. When you follow these instructions, you are on the right track to help treat existing health issues or prevent them from getting worse, or to simply stay healthy between visits. [Take charge of your health](#) with step-by-step instructions on what to do between health care visits. You can also partner with a [Military OneSource health and wellness coach](#) and explore [preventive services from TRICARE](#).



Week 3

It's important to obtain, process, and understand your health information results in order to make more informed health decisions. Take steps to understand your body and medical history so that you can identify symptoms of possible medical conditions. Being knowledgeable about your health can increase your readiness, improve your performance, and build resilience. Did you know there are no signs or symptoms of high cholesterol, but that you can check your cholesterol with a simple blood test to see if you are at risk for cardiovascular disease?¹ Health information like this could help save your life or a shipmate's life. But where should you start to increase your knowledge about your body and disease? To learn more about the human body, surgical procedures, and other health topics, watch these [health videos and interactive tutorials](#) for reliable, up-to-date health information. You may also find this [medical encyclopedia](#) helpful.

Week 4

Be aware that some health maintenance medications, like multivitamins, can interact with medications prescribed by a health care provider causing harmful effects. Medications can interact with one another, causing a decrease in the effectiveness of the medication, or worse, a serious negative reaction. It's important your health care provider knows about all the medications you take, including any health maintenance medications, such as multivitamins, pain relievers, or [dietary supplements](#). Reference this [medication interaction fact sheet](#) to learn more about steps you can take to prevent any negative outcomes.

References

¹Cholesterol. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. www.cdc.gov/cholesterol. Reviewed March 2015. Accessed August 2015.